

Washington, DC-Wednesday, Congressman Harry Teague hosted a tele-town hall with veterans from across southern New Mexico to unveil a package of bills aimed at providing Honor, Opportunity, Pride and Excellence (HOPE) for New Mexico's Veterans.

The tele-town hall was attended by over 1,000 constituents interested in Veterans issues from across southern New Mexico. During the call Congressman Harry Teague was able to outline his agenda on Veterans issues and answer live questions on a wide range of topics including veteran's health benefits, access to medical facilities, as well as the need for more Veteran's service facilities in New Mexico.

"As a member of the Veterans' Committee, I feel it's my responsibility to fight for veterans at every turn, and I'm proud to have had some successes since joining the committee. The biggest of which is getting "advance appropriations" for the VA included in the budget," said Congressman Teague during the call. "Today, I am announcing the next phase in my work for veterans. This week, I am introducing a package of 5 bills that together provide Honor, Opportunity, Pride and Excellence or HOPE for New Mexico's Veterans."

One of the bills in the HOPE for New Mexico's Veterans Package seeks to waive fees for disabled vets participating in the VA home loan program. The Disabled Veterans of America have expressed strong support for this legislation and recently wrote a letter to Congressman Harry Teague stating "In these difficult economic times, such legislative action goes far in reducing the burden felt by so many, particularly those joined the ranks of the military," the letter states. "For this reason, DAV supports your legislation."

Congressman Harry Teague has introduced 5 pieces of legislation that were developed in collaboration with local veterans and veterans' service organizations to serve the needs of Veterans in Southern New Mexico:

HOPE for New Mexico's Veterans

HR 2180 Increases disabled vets ability to purchase a home by waving fees for disabled vets participating in the VA home loan program who are recalled to active duty.

HR 2504 Increases services available for homeless veterans, by raising the level of funding available for "Grant and Per Diems" or GPDs provided by the VA to institutions that care for homeless vets.

HR 2505 Promotes the accessibility of PTSD and mental health care in rural areas through expanded tele-health services. The bill creates a pilot program to utilize tele-health to increase veterans' access to mental treatment over the internet.

HR 2506 Provides screenings and care for tinnitus, a sometimes debilitating hearing impairment caused by combat noise.

VA Work-Study Care Providers Increases the number of VA work-study personnel who can provide care in rural areas.

All bills have been referred to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC). The bill to provide increased access to home loans for disabled vets, HR 2180, will be heard today in the HVAC Economic Opportunity Subcommittee today.

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